

“THE DEAD WILL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE”

Christadelphians officially teach that at the first resurrection the dead will be raised with mortal bodies, judged, and then if deemed worthy granted to become incorruptible at which point they will be immortal. However, it is to be noted that many individual Christadelphians do not hold this view.

THE REASONS GIVEN FOR MORTAL RESURRECTION

1. That all descriptions in the Bible of resurrections that actually occurred were to mortality. This includes the resurrection of Jesus.
2. That before any Christian is granted immortality he/she must stand before “the judgement seat of Christ” so that either a favourable or unfavourable judgement will be handed down to them.
3. That the Greek word *egeiro* means ‘rebuilt’ rather than “raised” where the resurrection is spoken of, so that one is ‘rebuilt’ into an immortal after one has “stood up” as a mortal in the resurrection.
4. That in his book *Anastasis* (pp. 29, 30) John Thomas used three other Scriptures to establish the mortal resurrection view:

“...give life to your mortal bodies” (*Rom. 8:11*).

“...that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh” (*2 Cor. 4:11*).

“...not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life” (*2 Cor. 5:4*).

DID JESUS REALLY RISE FROM THE DEAD AS A MORTAL?

While it is true that most descriptions in the Bible of resurrections that actually occurred were to mortality so that those individuals eventually died again, it is not true that Jesus’ resurrection was as a mortal person.

THE WORD ‘EGEIRO’ = RAISED/REBUILT’

- ❖ “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will **raise** [Gk. *egeiro*] it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this **temple**, and will You **raise** [Gk. *egeiro*] it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body” (*John 2:19-21*).

Perhaps only on this one occasion in the NT does the word *egeiro* have the meaning of ‘rebuild,’ which is a process. However, Jesus’ challengers here misunderstood most of what he meant. So Jesus is not using *egeiro* in the same sense that his challengers used it; but rather he uses it in its normal sense of meaning “raise.” So this word cannot legitimately be transferred to other resurrection statements to mean ‘rebuild’ into an immortal after one has “stood up” as a mortal in the resurrection. Furthermore, Jesus was not “raised” *during* three days but was raised *after* that period. Although the word *egeiro* does not indicate whether the raising is to mortal or immortal life, it certainly does have the meaning of ‘to raise.’ Jesus demonstrated this meaning when bringing forth the dead Lazarus from the grave (*John 12:1*).

JESUS WAS RAISED IMMORTAL ON THE THIRD DAY

- ❖ “Now if Christ is preached that He has been **raised from the dead**, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen” (*1 Cor. 15:12, 13*).

Jesus was “**raised from the dead**” and verse 52 of 1 Corinthians 15 informs us that “*the dead will be raised incorruptible.*” So clearly Jesus was raised immortal as:

- ❖ “The angel said to Mary: ‘He is not here; for **He is risen**, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay’” (*Matt. 28:1*).

This was on the same day as the resurrection of Jesus and so he was immortal by this time because “*the dead will be raised incorruptible.*” So the idea that Jesus did not become imperishable until the 5th day is false to the Scripture record. He was not partly resurrected on the 3rd day. In fact, we learn that he was:

- ❖ “...declared to be the Son of God **with power** according to the Spirit of holiness, **by the resurrection from the dead**” (*Rom. 1:4*).

“With power” is one of the facets of imperishability and immortality according to 1 Corinthians 15. So the fact that the cause of Jesus’ being “the Son of God with power” was his “resurrection from the dead” must mean that it was a resurrection to immortality.

- ❖ “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the **firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep**” (*1 Cor. 15:20*).

If Christ was not raised immortal then he could not have been the first fruits because others were raised mortal before him. Furthermore, Jesus was the first of the “better resurrection.”

CHRISTIAN RESURRECTION WILL BE DIFFERENT TO THOSE WHICH ARE IN THE BIBLE RECORD

- ❖ “Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might **obtain a better resurrection**” (*Heb. 11:35*).

F.F. Bruce states on p. 326 of ‘The Epistle to the Hebrews’:

The resurrection to which they looked forward was “better” than that to which the boys of Zarephath and Shunem had been raised by Elijah and Elisha. Those boys were restored to mortal life, and in due course died; the resurrection for which the Maccabean martyrs hoped was a resurrection to endless life.

- ❖ “As for me [*David*], I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness” (*Ps. 17:15*).

It would be very disappointing for David if he awoke to normal mortality. He would have expected the “better resurrection” because of worthiness (*Luke 20:35*).

‘SOWN’ NOT ‘SPROUTED’

- ❖ “It is sown (Gk. *speiro*) in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (*1 Cor. 15:43, 44*).

It is argued that here *speiro* is in the passive voice’ meaning ‘sprouted,’ rather than in the ‘active voice’ meaning “sown.” This is appealed to in an attempt to show that the resurrected person “sprouts” in dishonour, weakness and with a natural body and is later raised [rebuilt] in glory, power and with a spiritual body. However, the lexicons do not support this view and all translations render this as in the ‘active voice’—“sown.” Furthermore, Paul is contrasting the body of the Christian now with what he shall have when coming forth from the grave.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN THE JUDGEMENT SEAT IS NOT
FOR THE GRANTING OR NOT OF IMMORTALITY

- ❖ “For we must all appear before the *judgment seat of Christ*, **that each one may receive the things done** in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).
There is nothing here to prove that all Christians will simultaneously appear before Jesus.

JUDGMENT OF CHRISTIANS BEGAN IN THE 1ST CENTURY ONWARD

- ❖ “For it is **time for judgment to begin with the household of God**; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Pet. 4:17).

So each Christian is being judged throughout his or her lifetime once they become part of “**the household of God.**” So Jesus already knows the character and worthiness of each Christian who appears before him and therefore they do not need to appear for any judgement in the court of assize sense. As Jesus said, the Christian “shall not come into judgment”:

- ❖ “... I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and **shall not come into judgment**, but has *passed from death into life*” (John 5:24).

There is no reason to imagine that this is proleptic. The Christian, because of his faith, has already passed from being “in Adam,” because of the death sentence incurred by Adam, and into life “in Christ.”

- ❖ ““This is **the covenant** that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” then He adds, “**Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more**”” (Heb 10: 16, 17).

The Christian is already in the New Covenant. For Jesus to begin to judge the worthiness of his brothers would be a breaking of the covenant.

- ❖ “If we confess our sins, He [*God*] is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to **cleans us from all unrighteousness**” (1 John 1:9).
- ❖ “I write to you, little children, because **your sins are forgiven you** for His name’s sake”
(1 John 2:12).
- ❖ “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose **names are in the Book of Life**” (Phil. 4:3).

Additionally each Christian has his/her name written in heaven, is unconditionally (other than leaving God) promised the crown, and will sit on thrones. So the objective is not to have ones name enrolled in heaven, but rather to not have it blotted out.

APPEARING AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT IS FOR REWARDS

- ❖ “And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be **repaid at the resurrection of the just**” (Luke 14:14).

ONE RECEIVES “A” REWARD – NOT “THE” REWARD

Jesus spoke of the grading of rewards according to ones works of faith (Luke 19:17-19). Such rewards will be given to the faithful Christian irrespective of certain failures:

- ❖ “Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for *the Day* will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and **the fire will test each one’s work**, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive *a reward*. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; **but he himself will be saved**, yet so as through fire” (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

So it is the work of the faithful Christian that will be assessed by Jesus. His/her salvation is already assured even though he/she must experience tribulation and remain faithful.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN THE BOOK *ANASTASIS*

- ❖ “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead *will also give life to your mortal bodies* through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11).

It is wrongly assumed that the “mortal bodies” mentioned here are to be in evidence after the resurrection. However, this is a statement with reference to the future giving of another type of life i.e. immortal life. So these were the same mortal bodies that Paul earlier had admonished the Romans to “not let sin reign in” (Rom. 6:12).

NOTE: Biblically the word “body” is simply a reference to a person (Rom. 12:1).

- ❖ “For we who live are always *delivered to death* for Jesus’ sake, **that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh**” (2 Cor. 4:11).

Based on the assumption that Jesus was resurrected mortal it is then imagined that Christians will be resurrected with mortal flesh. However, because the assumption is wrong as shown above, then the explanation is also wrong. The plain meaning of this verse is that Christians should live their lives [*present mortal flesh*], even risking death, in such a way as to reflect the life that Jesus lived on earth. This was Paul’s experience (Gal. 2:20). So 2 Corinthians 4:11 gives no reference to any post-resurrection mortal flesh.

- ❖ “For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that **mortality may be swallowed up by life**” (2 Cor. 5:4).

Again the mortality spoken of here is not a post-resurrection mortality but a present mortality because they are those who are groaning “in this tent” now. Verse 1 shows that if the current “tent” is destroyed i.e. by death then there is awaiting the Christian “a house not made with hands.” No other mortal tent or house is mentioned. **No new mortal body is ever spoken of in the Scriptures—such would be unnecessary.**

THE BETTER RESURRECTION IS FIRST

- ❖ “But the **rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished**. This *is* the first resurrection. ‘Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the *first resurrection*. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:5, 6).
- ❖ “And the **dead in Christ will rise first**. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be **caught up together with them** in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

IT IS “THE DEAD” WHO ARE RAISED IMMORTAL

- ❖ “**How are the dead raised up?** And *with* what (Gk. *poioo de*) body do they come?”... ⁴ So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. **The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.** It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. **It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.** There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body ...
⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised incorruptible**, and **we shall be changed**. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “*Death is swallowed up in victory.*” “*O Death, where is your sting.*” “*O Hades, where is your victory?*” (1 Cor. 15:35, 42-44, 50-55).

The poor argument that the dative case for *poioo de* does not mean “with,” but ‘to or for’ holds no water because in most cases it does mean “with” throughout the NT according to context. Certainly, the lexicons all show that the context of verse 35 indicates that “with” is the right choice as is evident in all translations of the Scriptures.

CHRISTIANS MUST BE RESURRECTED IMMORTAL

- ❖ “But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and **the resurrection from the dead**, neither marry nor are given in marriage; **nor can they die anymore**, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection” (Luke 20:35, 36).
- ❖ “*Blessed and holy is* he who has part in the first resurrection. **Over such the second death has no power**, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years”
(Rev. 20:6).

There is no indication in these verses that there is any kind of gap between the resurrection of Christians and their receiving of immortality. If Jesus says “**nor can they die anymore**” and “**the second death has no power**” over them, there is no reason to imagine that they have to wait for that to become their situation. Furthermore, because they are “*blessed and holy*” at the time of resurrection there is no reason for them not to receive their reward at that moment.

IMMORTAL FROM THE MOMENT JESUS APPEARS

- ❖ “...we know that when He [*Jesus*] is revealed, **we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He is”
(1 John 3:2b).

By Raymond C. Faircloth
www.biblicaltruthseekers.co.uk

